

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L 3405

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, KS, US
SUBJ: SITUATION OF KIM CHI-HA

REF: STATE 99798

1. DISSIDENT POET KIM CHI-HA IS STILL BEING HELD IN SODAEMUM PRISON SERVING A TERM OF LIFE PLUS SEVEN YEARS FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST LAW. HE IS REPORTEDLY IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION. HE IS VISITED ONCE EACH MONTH BY MEMBERS OF HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY - MOTHER, WIFE AND SON, BUT THEIR VISITS MAY ONLY BE OF FIVE MINUTES DURATION EACH. HIS LAWYERS HAVE UNLIMITED ACCESS TO HIM. THEY SAY THAT ONE OR MORE OF THEM VISITS KIM EACH MONTH AND THAT THEIR VISITS LAST FROM 30 TO 60 MINUTES ON AVERAGE. KIM RECEIVES FOOD PREPARED BY HIS FAMILY. HE ALSO RECEIVES READING MATERIAL ALTHOUGH NOT ALL MATERIALS LEFT FOR HIM BY FAMILY ARE APPROVED FOR TRANSMISSION TO HIM BY PRISON AUTHORITIES. KIM MAY NOT ENGAGE IN WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE WITH OUTSIDERS ACCORDING TO FAMILY.

2. IN JANUARY KIM RECEIVED VISITS OF PERHAPS HALF AN HOUR EACH FROM CARDINAL KIM AND FROM BISHOP CHI. REPORTEDLY, MEMBERS OF KOREAN DELEGATION TO PEN CONFERENCE IN AUSTRALIA SAW HIM SOME TIME LAST DECEMBER PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FOR THE CONFERENCE. KIM'S MOTHER TOLD EMBOFF THAT SHE THOUGHT LATTER VISIT WAS PROPAGANDA EFFORT ON PART OF
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ROKG TO ARM KOREAN PEN DELEGATES IN EVENT CHARGES ABOUT KIM'S SITUATION AROSE AT CONFERENCE. SUCH SPECIAL VISITS AS THOSE OF CARDINAL, BISHOP CHI AND KOREAN PEN DELEGATES HAVE NOT BEEN REPEATED SINCE.

3. KIM CHI-HA HAD APPARENTLY BEEN ALONE IN CELL SINCE HIS REINCARCERATION IN MARCH 1975. SINCE LATE LAST YEAR

TWO COMMON CRIMINALS SERVING LONG SENTENCES HAVE JOINED HIM. THIS WAS APPARENTLY DONE TO CONFORM TO LAW WHICH STATES THAT NO PRISONER CAN BE KEPT ALONE FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS (WITH SINGLE EXTENSION OF 6 MONTHS ON DISCRETION OF WARDEN.) THERE ARE REPORTS THAT KIM HAS STRUCK UP GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH NEW CELL MATES AND THAT HE MAY BE ON VERGE OF CONVERTING ONE OF THEM TO CATHOLICISM. SNEIDER

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